

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method of displaying layered data, said method
2 comprising:
3 identifying a plurality of shading colors, each of the
4 shading colors corresponding to a different data
5 layer;
6 identifying a plurality of data items to be displayed
7 in a display window;
8 for each data item:
9 determining one of the data layers corresponding
10 to the data item;
11 selecting a shading color from the plurality of
12 shading colors, wherein the shading color
13 corresponds to the determined data layer;
14 formatting the data item using the selected
15 shading color; and
16 displaying the formatted data item in the display
17 window, wherein each formatted data item is
18 positioned with a left margin substantially
19 similar to a left margin corresponding to
20 the other data items.
- 1 2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein the shading
2 color includes grayscale shading.
- 1 3. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 analyzing an attribute corresponding to each data
3 item;
4 determining a visual highlight corresponding to the
5 attribute;
6 including the visual highlight with the formatted data
7 item.

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- 1 4. The method as described in claim 3 wherein the visual
2 highlight is selected from the group consisting of
3 blinking, text coloring, bolding, italicizing,
4 underlining, striking through, shadowing, outlining,
5 capitalizing, and font changing.
- 1 5. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 receiving a data item selection from a user;
3 displaying one or more formatted data items below the
4 selected data item in response to the user
5 selecting an unexpanded data item; and
6 removing one or more formatted data items from the
7 display area beneath the selected data item in
8 response to the user selecting an expanded data
9 item.
- 1 6. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 displaying a graphic icon with each formatted data
3 item, the graphic icon indicating whether the
4 formatted data item is expanded.
- 1 7. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 displaying an alphanumeric level identifier with each
3 formatted data item that identifies the level
4 corresponding to the formatted data item.
- 1 8. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2 displaying a level indicator bar with each formatted
3 data item, wherein one margin of the level
4 indicator bar indicates a data level
5 corresponding to the formatted data item.
- 1 9. An information handling system comprising:

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2 one or more processors;
3 a memory accessible by the processors;
4 a display screen accessible by the processors; and
5 a layered data display tool to display layered data on
6 the display screen, the layered data display tool
7 including:
8 means for identifying a plurality of shading colors,
9 each of the shading colors corresponding to a
10 different data layer;
11 means for identifying a plurality of data items to be
12 displayed on the display screen;
13 for each data item:
14 means for determining one of the data layers
15 corresponding to the data item;
16 means for selecting a shading color from the
17 plurality of shading colors, wherein the
18 shading color corresponds to the determined
19 data layer;
20 means for formatting the data item using the
21 selected shading color; and
22 means for displaying the formatted data item on
23 the display screen, wherein each formatted
24 data item is positioned with a left margin
25 substantially similar to a left margin
26 corresponding to the other data items.

1 10. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 wherein the shading color includes grayscale
3 shading.

1 11. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for receiving a data item selection from a user;
4 means for displaying one or more formatted data items
5 below the selected data item in response to the
6 user selecting an unexpanded data item; and
7 means for removing one or more formatted data items
8 from the display area beneath the selected data
9 item in response to the user selecting an
10 expanded data item.

1 12. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for displaying a graphic icon with each
4 formatted data item, the graphic icon indicating
5 whether the formatted data item is expanded.

1 13. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for displaying an alphanumeric level identifier
4 with each formatted data item that identifies the
5 level corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 14. The information handling system as described in claim
2 9 further comprising:

3 means for displaying a level indicator bar with each
4 formatted data item, wherein one margin of the
5 level indicator bar indicates a data level
6 corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 15. A computer program product for displaying layered
2 data, said computer program product comprising:
3 means for identifying a plurality of shading colors,
4 each of the shading colors corresponding to a
5 different data layer;

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6 means for identifying a plurality of data items to be
7 displayed in a display window;
8 for each data item:
9 means for determining one of the data layers
10 corresponding to the data item;
11 means for selecting a shading color from the
12 plurality of shading colors, wherein the
13 shading color corresponds to the determined
14 data layer;
15 means for formatting the data item using the
16 selected shading color; and
17 means for displaying the formatted data item in
18 the display window, wherein each formatted
19 data item is positioned with a left margin
20 substantially similar to a left margin
21 corresponding to the other data items.

1 16. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 wherein the shading color includes grayscale shading.

1 17. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 further comprising:
3 means for receiving a data item selection from a user;
4 means for displaying one or more formatted data items
5 below the selected data item in response to the
6 user selecting an unexpanded data item; and
7 means for removing one or more formatted data items
8 from the display area beneath the selected data
9 item in response to the user selecting an
10 expanded data item.

1 18. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 further comprising:

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3      means for displaying a graphic icon with each
4      formatted data item, the graphic icon indicating
5      whether the formatted data item is expanded.

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1 19. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 further comprising:

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3      means for displaying an alphanumeric level identifier
4      with each formatted data item that identifies the
5      level corresponding to the formatted data item.

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1 20. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2 further comprising:

3 means for displaying a level indicator bar with each
4 formatted data item, wherein one margin of the
5 level indicator bar indicates a data level
6 corresponding to the formatted data item.